

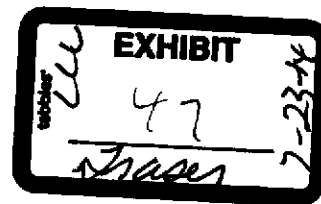


## The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator Leticia Van de Putte, R. Ph.  
District 26

January 21, 2011

The Honorable Robert Duncan  
Texas Senate  
3E.10 - Capitol Building  
Austin, TX 78711

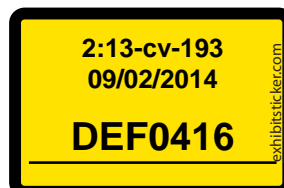


Senator Duncan:

Thank you for our candid discussion yesterday. After talking on the phone with those Senators who represent districts in which minority voters are electing candidates of their choice, and who also speak on behalf of the minority voters in the state, it is clear that there is widespread concern regarding the process we discussed. I want to reiterate our deep concern for the timing of the public hearing on voter I.D. legislation, along with other related troublesome issues. We are also extremely concerned that the timing of this will not allow the participation of those who would be deeply affected – senior citizens, those with disabilities, students, and women with children.

First of all, the Lieutenant Governor, fully aware that most if not all of the Senators had left town on Thursday (if not Wednesday afternoon), waited until very late in the day Thursday to deliver a letter to Senators, literally slipping it under most office doors after hours, serving notice that the Senate would convene as a Committee-of-the-Whole the following Monday, four days later, in order to take up voter I.D. legislation. He did so a day after the Senate unanimously passed Senator Whitmire's resolution specifically authorizing all Senators to be absent from the Capitol until Monday afternoon.

Please understand the stark contrast to the previous session two years ago, when Senators knew a month or more in advance that a full hearing on this legislation would take place, and were able to adequately prepare for it.



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It is impossible to interpret this action in any way other than to prevent a balanced discussion and full participation on this issue. With all due respect, no fair-minded judge in America would allow a trial involving fundamental rights to proceed without providing each side adequate time to prepare.

Additionally, as you know, on this issue alone, Senate Republicans have ensured that Senators representing districts in which minority voters are playing a determinative role in electing Senators of their choice will be unable to protect our constituents by blocking this legislation, by bypassing the Senate two-thirds tradition and instead considering voter I.D. legislation through a "special order"-- adopted in Senate rules earlier this week. This action ensures that we cannot block this legislation as would be possible with any other legislation considered this session. In previous legislative sessions in which we have preserved the two-thirds rule, all the Senators representing districts in which minority voters are playing a determinative role in electing the Senator of their choice did indeed block legislation designed to achieve the same result blocking the bill.

Some Senators also point out that under the Senate Rules of the 82nd Legislature (SR 36), there has been inadequate notice of posting under our rules to proceed with this legislation which cannot be remedied such that that any bill would be eligible to be heard on Monday.

Finally, I would again point out to you that Monday, in consultation with the state's leadership, we had already arranged to dedicate this day as "Wounded Warriors Day," in which combat veterans from across the state are to be honored by the Texas Senate. I fear that to schedule a time-consuming and divisive hearing on voter I.D. legislation for the same day would be interpreted by these veterans, and many Texans, as disrespectful.

In light of all of the above, I again ask that you reconsider your decision to convene a Committee-of-the-Whole on Monday and instead afford Senators speaking on behalf of minority voters adequate time to prepare to address the issue and prepare a sufficient record for this completely different type of voter I.D. bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leticia Van de Putte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leticia" being more prominent.

Leticia Van de Putte, R.Ph.

cc: US Department of Justice, Voting Rights Section

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